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JESUS CHRIST *the true Foundation of a*
Sinner's Hope.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED BY

ABRAHAM AUSTIN;

ON

HIS LAYING THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF A NEW
MEETING-HOUSE, INTENDED TO BE ERECTED
IN CHURCH-YARD COURT, FETTER-LANE,
LONDON, JUNE 9, 1790.

*—The foundation of God standeth sure.—Other foundation
can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

PAUL.

Taken in Short Hand by WILLIAM RAMSEY.

L O N D O N:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author begs leave to inform the Reader, that this discourse appears in print, in consequence of the earnest and repeated solicitations of some of his friends, who heard it, and whom he wishes to gratify; but on the present occasion has acted with great reluctance; not intending that any of his productions should in this way be presented to public view: however, as he is not ashamed of the subject matter of it (that being the only ground of his own hope towards God, and the chief source of his joy), he commits it, with the reader and himself, into the hands of that Almighty Saviour, who out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, can perfect praise.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

I S A I A H xxviii. 16.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone; a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

WE have just now, my Brethren, been engaged in the performance of a work, which, to some of us here present, appears of considerable moment; I mean, the laying a foundation-stone of a place, intended to be erected for the worship of Almighty God, and for the preaching of the everlasting Gospel.

It is possible that, as we have followed that circumstance with some devotional exercises, some mistaken construction may be put upon our conduct, and to prevent which you will permit me to make a remark or two respecting it.

We do not conceive, that, by any thing of this kind, it is in our power, or the power of

any man, to communicate holiness to a material building; we consider places of worship holy in a relative sense only, that is, when the people of God are assembled therein, for the worship of God, and the divine presence is in the midst of them, according to his promise; so the Lord taught his servant Moses*, when he appeared to him on the Mount Horeb, when Moses attempted to draw near the Lord, and he was pleased at that time to manifest his glory in an especial manner to him: he is taught to put off his shoes from his feet, and the reason assigned is, that the place whereon he stood was holy ground, holy, because the Lord was in an especial manner there; but when the divine presence was withdrawn, that spot was no more than any other part of the earth.—In the same light we now consider places of worship.

But we designed, by those exercises, to profess in the presence of you all, that we have begun, desire to carry on, and complete this important work in the name and fear of the Lord; with an humble desire to promote the good of precious souls, and his glory, and (as what we are not ashamed to own) therein to lift up our hearts to him for his blessing: knowing (as the psalmist has taught us) that except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: even as except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain †.

You will, I am persuaded, also have candour enough to suppose that it is not my design to detain you with a detail of circumstances respect-

* Exod. iii. 1—6.

† Psal. cxxvii. 1.

ing this building. I have read to you this portion of God's word with a different view, that is, in order to lead my own thoughts and yours to a subject of infinitely greater importance. You will find, by a proper attention to our text, that we have there presented to our consideration a Builder, and a foundation, that can admit of no parallel, that can have no superior, or even equal: you will find the blessed God himself, the infinitely great and glorious Jehovah, there represented to us under the character of a builder; and the foundation, to be the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, who came of the Jews according to the flesh, who is over all God blessed for ever.

You will therefore favour me with your serious regard, whilst I attempt to illustrate this portion of God's word, without referring to the context, lest I be too tedious, by remarking the following particulars:

I. The properties of this foundation: it is styled a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone; a sure foundation.

II. The Builder by whom it is laid: Behold, saith the Lord God, *I* lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.

III. The manner in which we are called to attend to the instruction given us concerning these particulars; and the advantages of so attending. Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, *I* lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

That you may be in no doubt about the application of that part of our text, which *I* have considered as referred to the Lord Jesus Christ, I would recommend to you to read attentively, when you have an opportunity at home, the 2d chapter of the 1st Epistle of Peter, and you will find this text there quoted by the Apostle, and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, as a stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.

I shall then proceed to endeavour to point out the properties of this foundation.

1. You observe it is styled a stone. The design of this expression appears to be to set the foundation which it here describes in opposition to one formed by collecting a quantity of loose earth, or any thing of that kind which is not firm and solid in its nature, and which of course would be very unsuitable for a foundation : and it is styled a stone in order to shew that the Lord Jesus Christ answers that description in the most firm and solid manner, so that no soul that builds on him can possibly be disappointed : he will not fail in that character. Our Lord in the days of his flesh compares a man that hears the word of God, and is not practically influenced by it, to one that built his house upon the sand, and building it upon the sand it consequently falls when a storm comes upon it. But when he describes the man that is practically influenced by the word of God, he compares him to one that built his house upon a rock* : so the Lord

* Matt. vii. 24—28.

Jesus Christ as a foundation is styled a stone, and a rock.

We shall endeavour presently to shew the pertinency of these applications; but give me leave first a little to illustrate them.

2. It is styled a tried stone, not simply a stone, but a *tried* stone, that is, a stone selected from others, from a knowledge of its peculiar excellency; and approved on that account, as proper for the great and important end designed. As any builder that desired to lay a firm and solid foundation, would select from a quantity of materials, such parts as were well fitted for the purpose, would make choice of those which his judgment led him to conceive were of the best kind, and best adapted to answer the purpose of a solid and firm foundation: so the Lord Jesus Christ is fixed upon to answer this end, as a tried stone, or a stone that has been examined, and approved.

3. It is styled a precious corner-stone. Whatever possesses excellencies of its kind, becomes of course valuable; we esteem it on that account. Some suppose here is a reference to the custom of examining precious stones, and fixing a value upon them according to their excellencies*. It is styled a corner-stone. Now the corner-stone is placed in such a situation, that it unites the building, and of course becomes a more firm support to the superstructure: and the Lord Jesus Christ is styled a corner-stone, or a precious corner-stone, because he is of great value, and

* See upon the text Dutch Annotations, in English, by Theodore Haak, Esq.

the center of the unity of his church. He is the glorious foundation on which they are *all* built, by whom they are supported, in whom they are united in heart and affection, and built on whom, they become the everlasting habitation, or dwelling-place of the Most High.

4. It is styled a sure foundation, that is, laid by such a hand and such in its nature that no power can thrust it out of its place. The Lord Jesus stands in that capacity immoveable; he is in this respect (as he observed in the days of his flesh) a rock, on which his church shall be built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it *. Thus he is described in our text a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.

We shall now endeavour to remark the pertinency of these descriptions.

1. We consider the Lord Jesus Christ as a sure foundation, from what he is, and from what he has done for poor, lost, sinful man.

You will, I trust, my brethren, bear in mind that fact, that the scriptures have held forth to our view with so much plainness, that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and therefore on our own account, with respect to any thing we have done, or are able to do, or from any goodness or righteousness of our own, we have no proper ground to expect the divine favour, or everlasting life and happiness at his hand: we must therefore be led to something else for this ground of hope; and the Lord Jesus Christ is proposed to our view in the text

* Matt. xvi. 18.

to answer this important end. Out of love to our sinful race, he left the glory of heaven* : he who is the only begotten Son of God, he that was rich, for our sakes became poor; he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; he suffered for our sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. When you read of the wounds, the bruises, the agonies of the Son of God, remember he endured all this that he might be a foundation for poor sinners to rest upon, that he might support their souls, and save them from sinking into everlasting misery; and that upon him they might be built an habitation for the ever blessed God; that they might be glorified with him, and enjoy endless felicity in the world above. You will remember, my dear friends, in order that God might receive us to favour, that he might bestow upon us the blessings of salvation, that we might have peace with God, the pardon of our sins, and every Gospel blessing, the Lord Jesus Christ groaned in the garden of Gethsemane, died upon the accursed tree, hung there a spectacle to men and angels, and cried out under the weight of our iniquities, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—It pleased the Lord thus to wound him, to put him to grief, to make his soul an offering for sin, that by his stripes our souls might be healed†, and that believing in him, depending upon him, we might prove him a sure foundation.

* See 1 John, iv. 9. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Philipp. ii. 8.
1 Pet. iii. 18.

† Isai. liii. 5. 10.

Observe then, whenever a sinner is expecting mercy at the hand of God, is looking for the favour of God, is expecting to be happy with God in the world to come, upon any other foundation than that of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was thus delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification*, and now ever liveth at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us, he may figuratively be said to build upon the sand; he lays a most wretched foundation, that will certainly deceive him, and all his hopes will be found vain and delusive. But the soul that builds on the Lord Jesus Christ, that places a confidence in him, and looks for the mercy of God unto eternal life through him, will find him a stone, a firm and solid foundation, on which he may safely rest and never be disappointed.

2. He is styled a tried stone. The Father knew well the suitability of his only begotten Son to answer his great purpose with respect to the salvation of poor sinners; he knew there were none but him, in whom his perfections could be so glorified in the sinner's salvation; he therefore fixes upon him, chooses him before any other: and you observe, my brethren, that he is set in opposition to every other in this point of view. The Lord chose none of the sons of men; he chose no angel, but he chose his only begotten Son, who in time became the son of man, and died that he might fulfil his Father's gracious purpose: the Father hath approved him in all that he hath done; he perfectly finished the work his Father gave him to do; in him and with him

* Rom. iv. 25. viii. 34.

the Father was ever well pleased ; and therefore our attention is directed to him thus : Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth *. He is rejected indeed of men (for such is the ignorance and folly of the human heart, such is the ignorance and folly even of those who are very wise in other respects, that they are led to prefer almost any thing and every thing before the Lord Jesus Christ, as the alone ground of their hope in the sight of God); but God hath chosen him ; he is the stone approved in his sight, selected on account of his excellencies, and approved in all that he is, and in all that he hath done.

It is worthy of observation as matter of fact, (if not intimated in the text) that the Lord Jesus hath in all ages been proved and tried by poor sinners, as a foundation of hope ; and not one was ever disappointed in him. We have some particular circumstances recorded in scripture, that might throw some light upon this. That I may not detain you too long, I shall only mention two or three of these. You will remember what a wretched sinner Saul of Tarsus was, who afterwards became known in the church as the Apostle Paul. What was he once ? A great enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ. He tells us he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ ; he persecuted those that loved him, believed in him, and adhered to him ; he found a wretched pleasure in dragging them to prison, putting them to death, and compelling them to blaspheme †. But through grace he was led to know who this

* Isai, xlii. 1.

† Acts xxvi, 9—12.

Jesus was that he so persecuted: the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*? This poor unhappy man, that had been such an enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ, and such a persecutor of his saints, found mercy through him. He tells us therefore, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief†. Therefore the Lord Jesus is a tried stone, a stone that has been proved sufficient for the very chief of sinners: the persecutors of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his people, have depended upon him for mercy, and found mercy through him. I obtained mercy, says Paul, that the Lord Jesus Christ might in me shew forth all long suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting‡.

You will remember, my brethren, that one that had been favoured with the company of our dear Redeemer, whom our Saviour taught, amongst the select number of his friends; I mean Peter: yet he so failed in that affection which he had professed with great warmth, that through the fear of man he was brought into such a state of mind as in a solemn manner to deny he so much as knew the Redeemer of mankind§. His sin was attended, beyond all doubt, with aggravated circumstances, highly aggravated indeed; but yet so tried a stone is the

* Acts ix. 4.

† 1 Tim. i. 15.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 16.

§ Matt. xxvi. 74.

Lord Jesus Christ as a foundation of hope, that this fallen disciple returns to God, and finds mercy through him, and becomes a faithful preacher of that Saviour whom he once thus basely denied.

You will further observe, the scriptures make mention of a very wicked woman, named Mary Magdalen *, who, through the Lord Jesus Christ, found mercy : it is said he cast out of her seven devils. Whatever be the precise idea intended to be conveyed by that expression, it certainly evinces to us that she was, in a very notorious sense, a wicked wretched person : but this was no bar to her advantage by this Saviour ; there is such a glory, such an all-sufficiency in him as a foundation, that no sinner of any description ever came to him or built their hopes upon him in vain : and therefore with the utmost propriety he is said to be a tried stone.

3. He is styled a *precious* corner-stone.—This is experienced by all that know him ; but it is matter of grief that this is not seen by many thousands who profess themselves to be Christians. They have no apprehensions of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and if you will permit me to tell you the reason, it is because they do not know themselves ; they do not know themselves to be poor, hopeless, guilty creatures, exposed to the wrath of God, without any power or ability to deliver themselves from that wretched situation. Whenever a man is brought to a due sense of this, and what is testified concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in the

* Mark xvi. 9.

scriptures is understood, then a value appears in the Saviour to every such soul, of which they know not how sufficiently to express their sense. The Apostle Peter says, Unto you therefore that believe he is precious. He is indeed the pearl of great price to them, and they are ready to part with all for him. They can take up the language of the Apostle Paul, and say, What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord *. And his worth remains when all creature comforts fail; when nothing can yield them support and satisfaction, the preciousness of Jesus continues, and he becomes more precious than ever in the dying hour. My brethren, death beds are as it were the touchstone of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ: when you and I come there, and we have our eye fixed upon him, we shall see such a value in him, that we would not part with him, or our interest in him, for ten thousand worlds: these would all be empty and insignificant; but in him we shall be enriched to all eternity. He is a precious stone, a precious corner-stone—Believers have proved him the bond of their union. I can appeal to you, my believing brethren, who have known something of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; is it not this that has knit your hearts together? Do you not love one another on account of that view you all have of the glory and preciousness of Jesus Christ, because you rejoice in the Lord

* Philipp. iii. 7, 8.

Jesus Christ, and your hopes are all built upon him? And hence an Apostle could say from the heart, could thus express his benevolence and kind wishes towards such—Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. He is the bond of the union of Christians; in him all their hopes are centered, from him their blessings are derived, and from him continually flow. Here all distinctions are swallowed up; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus†; he is the precious corner-stone, the uniting stone of his church, on whom they all rest, and in whom they will all rejoice, and that eternally.

4. He is styled a sure foundation, or a foundation surely and immoveably laid. Alas! the vain heart of man has often sought to put him out of his place. It is matter of lamentation that wise and learned men have wrote large volumes for no better an end, than that of attempting to thrust aside the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only foundation of a sinner's hope. There is something in the sinner's heart under its natural darkness, frequently aiming at this. You and I have sought to put many things in the place of our Lord Jesus Christ: perhaps our duties, our sorrow for sins, however necessary these be, yet they are a very great injury when put in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ: but all attempts of this kind, whether by men or devils, are in vain. Christ is the sure foundation; whatever

* Ephes. vi. 24.

† Gal. iii. 28.

be the devices of the human heart, the counsel of the Lord shall stand. And the soul that is not built on this stone, must prove the power thereof, in being thrust down to everlasting misery and woe *.——We shall then,

Secondly, proceed to take notice of the builder, by whom this foundation is laid. Behold, *I lay*, saith the Lord God, in Zion, for a foundation, a stone; I lay in my church, for they are all built on this foundation; they all bear witness to Christ: and if you ask them the reason of the hope that is in them, they can give it in one word—it is the Lord Jesus Christ: they all bear witness of him; therefore says God: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation. It is the great God, the blessed God, that has laid this foundation.

My brethren, a foundation, with respect to the present and eternal favour of God, is a matter of great moment. To be deceived, to be deluded, to have our expectations disappointed in this matter, how awful! How awful when we come to a dying hour! How awful, when we stand before God in judgment, to be found such as have not built upon a sure foundation! But that is sure which God has laid; he that is infinitely wise, infinitely good, he that is Almighty in power, grace, mercy, and compassion, cannot possibly provide for any purpose that which is inadequate; he cannot possibly mock the hopes of his creatures; no, he has laid the foundation, and therefore upon it the soul may safely rest. It is said in scripture, he that trusteth

* Luke xx. 18.

to his own heart is a fool: and to trust to our own hearts in the point of salvation, above all things evinces our folly. We ought to be satisfied, on this point, with no other authority than that which is divine. Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, saith God, this stone, this tried stone, this precious corner-stone, this sure foundation. I have laid it; and as you are to build your hopes with respect to my favour, as you are to form your expectations with respect to eternal life and blessedness at my hand, as all blessings are to come from me, and agreeable to my will, I lay the foundation, and this is what I have laid: Jesus is the stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Here then is the foundation that the eternal God has laid; and surely the sinner may trust the veracity of his God.

Thirdly (as I wish not to detain you), we proceed to remark the manner in which we are excited to attend to the instruction given us on this subject, and the advantage of so attending to it.

Is it not great condescension for the great God to instruct our souls? Oh, prize your Bible in this point of view; prize that precious book, because it contains instruction from the God of heaven; attend to the eternal Almighty God as your instructor on this momentous subject. I do not simply wish you to hearken to me, but to the God of your lives, the God on whom you every moment depend, and before whom you must shortly stand in judgment: it is his kind instruction; he calls upon you to hearken to what he says. Thus saith the Lord

God: Behold! Behold! Let your attention be excited here: do not you wish a foundation to rest your eternal all upon? God has kindly provided it, and kindly calls your attention to it. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation: and will you disregard the counsel of your God? Will you turn a deaf ear to his kind instructions, who has given you life, supplied your wants, and to whom you are indebted for whatever you enjoy? Will you disregard the admonition of him before whom you must shortly stand in judgment? And will you disregard such gracious counsel? He has your eternal welfare in view; he would have your hopes properly founded, that you may not be deluded; and therefore directs your attention to his dear son the Lord Jesus. He tells you plainly, I do lay in Zion this foundation; I have laid it in time past, and I still do it; I do it in all the ministrations of the gospel of my grace, to the sons of men. This is the foundation in all ages. It is worthy our observation that the Lord saith: I lay, not I have laid, but I lay, as though the blessed God had said, I am ever doing this, and I ever call upon you to regard this; that I do appoint, from first to last, this stone for a foundation.*

Though I did not intend to detain you, by referring to the context, yet one remark here seems necessary: you observe, this instruction is given to those unhappy men who scorned the word of God: you will discover this from the context; and, alas! how many scorners have there been in our day! Is there such an one now before God? May God in mercy look upon him,

him, and may such a soul be excited to hear the gracious instruction of that God that calls upon scorners to hear ; and to hear what? Why scorners might expect to hear God say, I will punish them, and that eternally ; my vengeance shall light and rest upon them. God was at this time about to visit his ancient people with sore vengeance ; but he gives them this kind instruction first, and points out the wretched hardness of their hearts, in being led to mock the message of the prophet, and to say, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement. Therefore thus saith the Lord : Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, &c. Your covenant with death, and your agreement with hell, alas ! are vain and delusive ; it is the obduracy of your spirits that leads you to any thing like this. But would you be safe, escape my present and eternal wrath—Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone. Now you see what grace is here displayed, that even the blessed God (so unwilling is he to execute vengeance, so rich in mercy, so great in grace) directs scorners of his gospel, of his word, to come to this foundation : and it is still laid as a foundation for such to build their expectations of mercy upon, so as not to be disappointed.

This will lead us to consider the great advantage of those that do attend to this instruction : He that believeth shall not make haste. What is meant by this ? It refers to that state of mind which persons experience when apprehensive of great danger, and know not where to flee for safety.

safety. This is the case sometimes with the sinner when roused to a sense of his guilt; then his soul trembles; he is afraid every moment may be his last here, and he may sink down into hell; he knows not where to fly, nor what to do; he is ready to think his sins are too great to be pardoned, and his mind, under a consciousness of guilt, is all confusion: he knows not where to look for safety; but here is the firm foundation, here is the sure ground of hope; and whosoever believeth on Jesus shall not make haste, shall experience no dismay, or wild confusion; he shall dwell safely, and none shall make him afraid; he shall experience that peace from God which passeth all understanding; for being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God *. The soul that comes to the Lord Jesus Christ, or believes in him, stands justified by him, acquitted from all guilt; God becomes his God, and he becomes a child of God †. The eternal God is his refuge, the everlasting arms are underneath him, and all the perfections of God are engaged for his safety ‡. The word of the Lord stands for ever; and though heaven and earth shall pass away, not one jot or tittle of his word shall fail; and that God that directs him to this foundation hath said, he shall not make haste; or, as the Apostle Peter explains it, he shall not be confounded; all his expecta-

* Rom. v. 1. 2.

† Gal. iii. 26.

‡ Deut. xxii. 27.

tions shall be answered, and more than answered; his soul shall be filled with the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall find every thing in him that he wants; all spiritual blessings shall be freely bestowed in him, and God will conduct him safe through this wilderness, to the mansions of eternal glory. When the dying moment comes, he shall not be confounded. Death is very solemn; the dying hour is a solemn period indeed! All creature comforts will then fail, our own goodness will then be a poor support; but the Lord Jesus Christ will support us. Then the soul that has believed in him, and continues to believe in him, will not be confounded; but may take up the solemn triumph, and say, O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; when the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up (this you and I shall see); when all nations shall be gathered together before the throne of God; the soul will stand undismayed, firmly supported, that has built on the Lord Jesus Christ; for the faithfulness of God is engaged for this end. Every evil will be hereby avoided, and every good secured; for (as we sang this evening) our God is a sun and shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly *; who regard his counsel, who come unto

* Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

Jesus, that live under the practical influence of redeeming mercy and grace; such will prove the truth that the psalmist rested upon, and of which he speaks with confidence, lifting up his heart to his God: "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory *." So firm is this foundation, so tried a stone, so precious a corner-stone, that whoever believeth on Jesus, shall not make haste, shall not be confounded.

I dismiss the subject then with a word or two by way of application.

Possibly, my dear friends (God only knows how this is), the things that have been mentioned to you this evening, may to some of you appear strange; but if this should be the case, do not despise them. Let me entreat you to take your Bibles when you go home, endeavour to recollect what you have heard, and see if you do not find these things in substance contained in the book of God. Especially, think seriously upon this gracious instruction: Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation. You certainly cannot think it wise, or even rational, to disregard your eternal concerns; you cannot think it wise and prudent to pass through life, and have no hope towards God. Surely to have hope before God, is a point of moment; and it is equally so that this hope be properly grounded. Now then may you study and reflect upon the precious truth presented to our attention in this

* Psalm lxxiii. 24.

part of the divine word ; compare it with what is contained in the 2d chapter of the 1st Epistle of Peter, and then you will see how properly this text is referred to the Lord Jesus Christ ; (and as you understand the New Testament account concerning him) you will see what a pertinent, what a beautiful, what an instructive description it contains.

Let me remind you, that though we are all now present before God, the living monuments of his sparing mercy, yet death will come ; death will soon come : it may be very soon with some of us. How awful will it be to go hence without ever having our hopes properly grounded with respect to God and eternity ! May you not hastily dismiss that thought ! Reflect seriously upon the subject ; and oh that the mercy of God, the rich love and grace of God, displayed in the sufferings and agonies of his Son, that sinners might be pardoned, accepted, and saved with an everlasting salvation, may excite you to pay attention to him, who is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him. And oh let the sinner that has felt the weight and burden of sin, regard this instruction : here you may come helpless, ruined, and undone by sin, and find a safe retreat. This is a foundation on which your souls may safely build, and to which the Lord God kindly directs you.

Lastly. You who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, permit me to exhort you in the language of the Apostle Peter, to be coming to Jesus, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious ; that is, be daily coming, continually look-

ing unto Jesus ; so you will prove you are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. He is a Saviour for poor sinners, for the vilest of the vile ; he purifies, he renews and sanctifies all that come to him : there are none that really build on this foundation ; none scripturally believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and go on in the practice of sin and wickedness : no, their union with this living stone forbids it ; they partake of his spirit, they partake of power from him by which they are enabled to deny all ungodliness, and live to the glory of him who died for their sins, and rose again. Then, brethren, be you ever coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may derive peace and comfort from him : reflect on the glory and suitableness of this foundation ; it cannot possibly fail you ; it is such in its nature, and laid by such a founder, that it cannot possibly disappoint you ; all your danger is in making something else the ground of your hope, or on any account neglecting this great and glorious salvation that is proclaimed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, this sure foundation.

I commend then what has been advanced to your serious consideration ; and may the God of all grace give you understanding.—AMEN.



F I N I S.

